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# BS 502 Introduction to Biblical Studies

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**Asbury Theological Seminary**  
**Area of Biblical Studies**  
**BS502: Introduction to Biblical Studies**

**Fall 2005**

**Bauer**

**Course Description**

The two-course sequence of BS501-502 comprises three interrelated sections: (1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation; (2) an introduction to the Old Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specialization's represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. (Professional), M.A. in Theological Studies, and M.A. Counseling degree students.

**Course Objectives**

1. The student will be able to trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the New Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.
2. The student will be able to discuss the historical background of the Bible, including the historical setting of the biblical story, and especially the story of the New Testament, and the critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various New Testament books, and will demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text.
3. The student will be conversant with the major issues in hermeneutics (i.e., will be able to identify these issues, articulate the main contemporary positions surrounding these issues, and present in a reasonable and informed fashion his/her own perspective regarding these issues), and will demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the actual interpretation and application of the New Testament text.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the New Testament text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will be able (a) to identify the macrostructure of a biblical book (including the structural development of the book in terms of its units and sub-units, and major structural dynamics within the book) and show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of the New Testament text; (b) to engage in a "close reading" of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation; (c) to employ various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation, for the interpretation of the New Testament text; (d) to move from interpretation of the New Testament passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the ability to exemplify principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the New Testament for Christian application.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to show how the teachings of individual passages within the New Testament contribute to the flow of biblical revelation in the large, and to trace, in at least a general way, the development of major biblical themes and motifs throughout the whole of scripture so as to articulate a biblical theology of these major biblical themes and motifs.
6. The student will be able to articulate the issues involved in integration and demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible with the area of his/her vocational interest.

### Course Texts

1. The Bible (NRSV)
2. *An Annotated Guide To Biblical Resources for Ministry*, Bauer
3. *Bible Study That Works*, Thompson
4. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Context, Methods, and Ministry Formation*, deSilva

### Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance, preparation, and participation in the class. Students missing more than three class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade.
2. Six assignments involving the methodological practice of the structural analysis of New Testament books, the close reading of individual New Testament passages, and the interpretation and application of New Testament passages to contemporary Christian life.
3. Participation in a small group that will develop a presentation on a critical method and its application to the study of a New Testament passage.
4. Four exams throughout the semester. Each exam will cover all features of class presentation and reading for the weeks it covers. Each exam (except the last), will be “take-home,” to be completed without use of any resources or notes. The only realistic and effective way to prepare for these exams is to be fully engaged day-by-day in the class sessions and to keep current with the reading schedule.

### Course Evaluation and Grading

The final grade will be calculated from the average of the eleven grades earned: 6 assignments; 4 exams; 1 group participation grade.

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1

- 9/6 Orientation  
9/8 Review of Method  
Introduction to the New Testament and New Testament Background  
*Read deSilva, 29-36*

#### Week 2

- 9/13 Review of Method, Continued  
Introduction to the New Testament and New Testament Background  
*Read deSilva, 37-144*  
9/15 Review of Method, Concluded  
Introduction to the Gospels

#### Week 3

- .Read deSilva, 145-192*  
9/20 Gospel of Matthew  
*Submit Survey of the Gospel of Matthew*  
9/22 Presentations on Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism

#### Week 4

- 9/27 Matthew 13:1-52  
*Submit Segment Survey of Mt. 13: 1-52*  
Presentations on Sociological Criticism, Narrative Criticism  
**Exam I distributed**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 9/29    | Interpretation of Parables   |
| Week 5  |  |
| 10/4    | Interpretation of Matthew 13:3b-9<br><i>Submit Interpretation of Matthew 13:3b-9</i>   |
| 10/6    | Interpretation of Matthew 13   |
| Week 6  |  |
| 10/11   | Gospel and Epistles of John<br><i>Read the Gospel and Epistles of John</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 391-474</i>   |
| 10/13   | The Book of Acts<br><i>Read the Book of Acts</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 348-390</i><br>Presentations on Historical Criticism and the Jesus of History |
| Week 7  |  |
| 10/18   | Analysis of Acts 2<br><b>Exam II distributed</b>   |
| 10/20   | Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of Acts 2  |
| Week 8  |  |
| 10/25   | Introduction to Paul<br><i>Read deSilva, 475-492</i>   |
| 10/27   | Galatians<br><i>Read Galatians</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 493-576</i>   |
| Week 9  |  |
| 11/1    | Analysis of Galatians, continued   |
| 11/3    | Analysis of Galatians, concluded<br><b>Exam III Distributed</b>  |
| Week 10 |  |
| 11/8    | Philippians<br><i>Read Philippians</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 640-667</i>   |
| 11/10   | Phillippians, concluded  |
| Week 11 |  |
| 11/15   | I Peter<br><i>Submit Survey of I Peter</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 841-864</i>   |
| 11/17   | Hebrews<br><i>Read Hebrews</i><br><i>Read deSilva, 776-813</i>   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 11/21-<br>11/25         | FALL READING WEEK  |
| Week 12                 |  |
| 11/29                   | I Peter 2:11-3:7<br><i>Submit Segment Survey and detailed analysis of I Peter 2:11-3:7</i> |
| 12/1                    | I Peter 3:1-6<br><i>Submit Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of I Peter 3:1-6</i>  |
| Week 13                 |  |
| 12/6                    | Interpretation and Evaluation/Application of I Peter 3:1-6, continued                      |
| 12/8                    | The Book of Revelation<br><i>Read Revelation</i><br><i>Read deSilva. 885-932</i>           |
| Final<br>Exam<br>Period | <b>Exam IV administered</b>  |

### **Final Exam**